

IN THE DRAWINGS

Corrected drawings are supplied herewith.

Enclosed are eleven (11) Replacement Sheets including revised Figures 1A-10C to replace the originally-filed eleven (11) drawing sheets including original Figures 1A-10C. The Replacement Sheets are submitted in response to the objection to the drawings, as noted on the Office Action Summary sheet and as detailed in the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review form. The Replacement Drawing sheets include formalized versions of original Figures 1A-10C. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

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REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed on March 6, 2006, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 1 and 5 are amended. Claim 8 is canceled. Claims 21-24 have been previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 37-49 have been added. As a result, claims 1-7, 9-20, and 25-49 are now pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 8. It is noted that claim 5 has been amended to correct a typographical error identified by the Applicant and not for reasons related to patentability. The amendments and additions to the claims are fully supported by the specification, as originally filed, and no new matter has been added. Applicant hereby respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks.

Objection to the Drawings

The drawings (Figures 1A-10C) were objected to for various informalities identified in the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review form. The enclosed eleven (11) Replacement Sheets include revised Figures 1A-10C, which are formalized versions of the originally-filed Figures 1A-10C. Applicant respectfully submits that revised Figures 1A-10C correct the informalities identified by the Draftsperson. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 30, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by Shaw (U.S. 6,102,135). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection for at least the following reasons.

The rejection states that Shaw discloses "a portable drilling or coring assembly shown specifically in Figs. 1, 3, 4 and 5, which comprises all of the claimed structure including a first stem section 40, a second drill stem section 48. The at least one engaging feature at the end of the first drill section is met by the reduced end portion 28' and the at least one mating feature for accepting the at least one engaging feature is anticipated by the spacer tube 40 which is located

at one end of the second drill stem (see Figs 3 and 4). . . . [T]he securing member for holding the engaging and mating [sic] features is met by the safety pin 34 of Fig. 4.”

With respect to claim 1, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 8, which the Examiner indicated was allowable. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, and claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11 dependent therefrom are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11 dependent therefrom.

With respect to claim 30, not all claimed elements and/or limitations of Applicant’s claim 30 can be found in Shaw. Applicant’s claim 30 recites, in part, “[a] method, comprising . . . coupling a securing member to the first drill stem element, wherein the securing member is located within the first portion of the slot”. In the Office Action, the Examiner refers to slot 42’ in Shaw as corresponding to the recited slot and safety pin 34 in Shaw as corresponding to the recited securing member. However, referring to Figs. 3 and 4, Shaw shows the safety pin 34 disposed within a radial opening 44 which is disposed apart from the slot 42’. In contrast, claim 30 recites “coupling a securing member to the first drill stem element, wherein the securing member is located within the first portion of the slot”. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully submits that Shaw does not meet the asserted language of claim 30.

Because Shaw does not show every element of claim 30, the rejection is not supported. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested with respect to claim 30 and claim 31 dependent therefrom.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant initially notes a discrepancy in the Office Action between the Office Action Summary sheet, which indicates that claims 12-29 are allowed, and the Detailed Action, which indicates that only claims 12-20 and 25-29 are allowed. Because claims 21-24 were previously canceled, Applicant assumes that the Examiner intended to state on the Office Action Summary sheet that only claims 12-20 and 25-29 are allowed and that the Examiner’s statement that claims 12-29 are allowed was a typographical error.

Applicant acknowledges and thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowability of claims 12-20 and 25-29.

Claims 3, 5, 8, 10, and 32-36 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate material from allowable claim 8. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and claims that depend therefrom are now in condition for allowance.

Also, because original claims 30 and 31 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated above, it is believed that claims 32-36 are similarly in condition for allowance due to their dependence therefrom. However, Applicant acknowledges the allowability of claims 32-36 if rewritten to incorporate the elements of their base claims and any intervening claims, and reserves the right to rewrite claims 32-36.

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CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (612) 373-6944 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

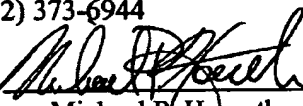
Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL TJADER

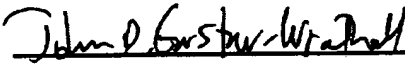
By his Representatives,

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Date June 28, 2006

By 
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being filed using the USPTO's electronic filing system EFS-Web, and is addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 28 day of June, 2006.



Name


Signature